

**The apparition at Mamre**

18:1 There appeared to him YHWH, by the oaks of Mamre, [while he was sitting] at the entrance of the tent in the heat of the day.

2 He lifted up his eyes and saw: behold, [there were] three men standing [over him].

[When he saw them], he ran [to meet them] from the entrance of the tent, and he bowed to the ground.

3 [And he said this]: “[My lords, I pray], [if I have found] favor [in your eyes], pray do not go on past your servant.

4 [Pray let there be fetched] [a little water]. Then wash your feet, and recline under the tree.

5 Let me bring a bit of bread, that you may refresh your hearts, and afterwards go on, since for *this* you have passed by your servant,” and they replied, “Indeed, you should do what you have proposed.”

6 [And hurriedly], [Abraham went] into the tent to find Sarah.

[He said to her], “[Go quickly now], [get three *seah*] measures of choice flour. Knead it and make cakes.”

7 To the cattle Abraham ran, and he took a calf—one tender and fine—to the servant-boy, who rushed to prepare it.

8 He took some curds [and also some milk], and he took the calf that he had prepared, [and set these] [before them], [and he stood by them]—[he stood over them] under the tree, and they ate.

9 Then they [asked of him], “Where is Sarah your wife?” He replied, “Here in the tent.”

10 [Then said one of the men], “Be assured [that I will return] to you at this time [next year],

and you will see that a son has been born to Sarah your wife. Now Sarah [was listening in] at the door of the tent, and the man was behind it.

11 Abraham and Sarah were old, well along in days. It had ceased to be with Sarah, the manner of women.

12 And Sarah laughed [inside herself], saying, “[After I] [am worn out], will I experience pleasure? And my husband is old!”

13 Then said YHWH to Abraham,

“Why [was this], that Sarah laughed, [and why did she say], ‘Could this [really be true] [to have a child], [when I am so old]?’

14 Too wondrous for YHWH, [could anything be]?

[At the appointed time] I will [return to you], at this time next year, [end aliyah] and Sarah will have a son.”

15 [But she lied]—[Yes, Sarah denied it] [by speaking these words], “I did not laugh,” since [she was afraid].

[But God\* said no], “you did laugh.” \*or: Abraham said it

## Abraham intercedes

18:16 [They got up] from there—the men—[and looked down] upon the face of Sodom.

[When they left, Abraham] went with them, [to send them off].

17 Now YHWH had said, “Shall I conceal from Abraham what I am about to do?

18 [Now that Abraham] [is about] [to become] a nation great and mighty,

[the peoples will bless themselves through him]—all the nations of the earth.

19 For I [have acknowledged him] [for the purpose] that he will command his children and his household after him, [that they must keep] the way of YHWH, by doing charity and justice, [in order that] there be brought by YHWH to Abraham that which he has promised to him.

20 Then said YHWH, “[The crying out] in Sodom and Gomorrah [is very great]. [Now, because their sin] is heavy, indeed,

21 I will go down and see [what the outcry implies], that has come up to Me—[if they have done], all these things. And if not, I must know.”

22 They turned from there—the men—and went on to Sodom. [Meanwhile Abraham] remained standing before YHWH.

23 Approaching God, Abraham said this: “[Will You] sweep away the virtuous along with the wicked?

24 Perhaps [there will be found] fifty who are righteous, inside the city. [Will You in fact]

[sweep it away] and not [spare the place] [for the sake] of the fifty who are righteous, that are in its midst?

25 Far be it from You—[a sacrilege it is]—[to do [a thing such as this], [to bring death] to the virtuous with the wicked; that it be the same for the innocent as for the guilty. Far be it from You, the judge of all the earth not to act with justice.”

26 And replied YHWH, “[If I should] [find in Sodom] fifty righteous people in the midst of the city, I will bear with the whole place [for their sake].”

27 Then spoke up Abraham as follows: “[See now], I have ventured to speak to my Lord, I who am dust and ashes.

28 [But if perchance it should be] [that there should lack] of the fifty righteous, [five souls], would you destroy—for want of the five—the whole city? God answered, “[I will not] destroy it [if I should] [find there] forty-five who are righteous.”

29 Abraham spoke yet again. [He addressed] God by saying, “[Perhaps it will be]: there are found there, just forty.”

[And God said], “[I will not] do it for the sake of the forty.”

30 [And now Abraham said], “[Pray let it not be] that I anger my Lord, [if I continue]. [What if it should be] that there are found there only thirty?”

[And God said], “I will not do it if I find there, thirty.”

18:31 [And Abraham said], “[Now I pray], [may I be so bold] as to speak to my Lord: [what if it should be], there are found there just twenty?”  
 [And God said], “I will not destroy for the sake of the twenty.”  
 32 [Once again Abraham spoke], “[May it not occur] that I anger my Lord if I speak [just one more time].  
 [Suppose it is the case] that are found there, just ten?” [And God said], “I will not destroy for the sake of the ten.”  
 33 Then departed YHWH, [just as soon as] [He had finished] speaking to Abraham. [end aliyah] And Abraham returned to his place.

### The destruction of Sodom

19:1 [There came] two angels to Sodom in the evening, while Lot was sitting [at the gate of Sodom].  
 [When he saw them, Lot] rose [to meet them], and bowed low to the ground.  
 2 [And he said], “Please [now my lords], [turn aside] [this I pray] to the house of your servant, [spend the night], and wash your feet;  
 [then wake up early] and go on your way.” [But they replied], “No, rather, in the square [we’ll spend the night].”  
 3 [But Lot pressed them] exceedingly, [so they turned] [toward him] and came to his house.  
 He made for them a meal. *Matzahs* (unleavened bread) he baked, and they ate.  
 4 [Not yet] [had they lain down], when the men of the town, the men of Sodom, surrounded the house, [from young lad] [to old man],  
 [all the people], [even from the the outskirts].  
 5 They called to Lot and said to him, “[Tell us, where] [are the men] who came to you tonight? [Bring them out] to us, that we [may know them].”  
 6 [He went out] [to them], Lot [came to the entrance], and the door he shut behind him.  
 7 [Lot then said], “Pray, my brothers, [don’t be so wicked]!”  
 8 ‘Listen, I have two daughters who [have not known] any man. [Let me bring them out], I pray, to you, [and you may do] [with them]  
 what is good in your eyes. [However I say], to the men here don’t do a thing, since indeed they have come under the shadow of my rafters!”  
 9 [But they said], “[Move aside]!” They said, “[This one] [came as a foreigner] and already is a judge!  
 [Therefore now], we will do worse to you than to them.”  
 And they pressed [on the man]—[upon Lot]—exceedingly, [and stepped closer] to break down the door.  
 10 [Then put out] the men their hands, [and pulled him in] [they brought Lot] [towards them], into the house. And the door was then closed.  
 11 [As for the men] [who were at the entrance] [to the house] [they struck them] with blindness,  
 [all men from young] to old, [who were then helpless] to find the entrance.

19:12 Then said the men—[they put this to Lot]: “[Whom else] do you have here—  
a son-in-law, your sons or your daughters? (Whoever you have) in the city, [take them out] of the area.  
13 Destruction we bring to this place here, for great is their cry [before the face] of YHWH. (We were sent by YHWH) [to bring it to ruin].”  
14 Then went out Lot [in order to speak] [to his sons-in-law], who had [married his daughters]. He said, “[Get moving]. Come out of the place here.  
(To be destroyed by YHWH) is this town.” But he seemed like a jester in the eyes of his sons-in-law.  
15 Just as the dawn was breaking, they exhorted him—the messengers—[pushing Lot on] and saying,  
“Get up, take your wife and two daughters [that are here], [lest you be swept away] in the iniquity of the city.”  
16 [And Lot acted late and hesitated and procrastinated] [until the men seized—his hand, [the hand of his wife], and the hand of his two daughters,  
for pity of YHWH was upon him. They brought him out and left him outside the city.  
17 [And it happened] when the men had brought them outside, they said, “escape for your life!  
[Don’t look] behind you. Neither stop [anywhere in the valley]. To the hills you must flee, [lest you be swept away]!  
18 And said Lot to them, “[No, I beg you], my Lord!  
19 [So now, I pray], if I have found—I your servant—favor in your eyes,  
[You have shown great] faithfulness in how You have dealt with me, keeping alive my soul.  
[But as for me], [I am not] able to escape to the hills, lest there cling to me the evil, and I die!  
20 [So I pray], the town [over there] [is near enough] for me to flee to it—it is so tiny.  
Let me flee, I pray, [to that place]: even though [so very small] [end aliyah] [is that place], to keep alive my soul!  
21 The angel replied, “Very well, I lift up your face (*that is: I grant you the favor*) also in this matter,  
[by abstaining from] overthrowing this town, of which you speak.  
22 [Make haste] and flee [to that place], because [I am not] able to do a thing [until you arrive] there,  
[regarding which], they call the name of the town: Tzo’ar (*meaning “tiny”*).  
23 The sun was going out over the earth [at the time that Lot] was arriving in Tzo’ar.  
24 [Now YHWH] [caused to rain down] [over Sodom] and on Gomorrah sulphur and fire. It came down from YHWH—[out of the heavens].  
25 He overturned these two cities, [along with] [the entire plain]: all the inhabitants of the cities and what grew on the ground.  
26 And she looked back—his wife [gazed behind him], [and she turned into] a pillar of salt.

19:27 He got up—Abraham—[the next morning], [and went back to the plain], where he had stood there, before YHWH.  
 28 [And he looked down] at the face of Sodom and Gomorrah, and stared at the sight of the land of the plain,  
 [and he could see]—he saw going up, dense smoke [from the earth], like the smoke from a furnace.  
 29 [And it came to pass] after destroyed by *Elohim* were all the cities [of the plain],  
 that God (*Elohim*) remembered Abraham, [and God sent out] Lot from the midst of the upheaval,  
 when He overturned the cities, of which there had dwelt within them: Lot.

### The origin of the Moabites and the Ammonites

30 [And so he went up]: Lot went up out of Tzoar and settled [off in the hills]. His two daughters [were with him],  
 since he was afraid to settle in Tzoar. He lived in a cave: he himself, and his two daughters.  
 31 [One day there spoke] [the firstborn daughter] to the younger one: “Our father is old.  
 [As for a man]—[there is none left] on earth, to come into us (or: who can consort with us), as is the way of all the world.  
 32 Come! [let’s have him drink]—[let our father get drunk] on wine, and [we’ll sleep with him], and keep alive, through our father, our seed.”  
 33 [So they had him drink]—[their father got drunk] on wine on that night. Then went in the firstborn, and slept with her father,  
 and he didn’t know of her lying down, [or of her getting up].  
 34 It happened [on the next day]: she said—the firstborn—to the younger, “See? I slept last night with my father.  
 Let’s have him drink wine [again tonight]. [Then you] [go in] [and sleep with him], and we’ll keep alive, through our father, our seed.”  
 35 [So they had him drink] also [on that night]—[that very next night]—[they had their father] drink wine.  
 Then went up the younger and slept with him, and he didn’t know of her lying down, [or of her getting up].  
 36 [And they became pregnant]—the two daughters of Lot—[from their father].  
 37 [She gave birth]—the firstborn—[to a son], and she called his name Moab (*meaning*: “By Father”).  
 He is the father of the Moabites, to this day.  
 38 [The younger one], too, [bore a son], and she called his name Ben-Ami (“Son of My Kinspeople”).  
 [And this one was] the father of the Ammonites, to this day.

## Abraham at Gerar

20:1 He travelled[from there]—Abraham left for the land of the Negev. He settled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar.

2 [And he was saying]—[when Abraham] spoke of Sarah his wife, “My sister is she.”

[So messengers were sent] by Abimelekh, king of Gerar, [and he took her]—[he took Sarah].

3 [But there came to him] *Elohim*—[God came to Abimelekh] in a dream that night, and spoke [these words to him]:

“Now [you are a dead man] [because of the woman] [you have taken], for she is ruled over by a husband (i.e. is already married).”

4 [But Abimelekh] had not come near her. [And so he said], “[O my Lord], a nation—even one that is righteous—will you slay?”

5 Did [he not] [say to me], ‘She is my sister’? And she too—even she said, ‘He is my brother’.

[With an innocent heart] and with clean hands, I did this thing.”

6 [And God answered]:—to him *Elohim* [spoke, in a dream]: “Also I do know that with [an innocent heart] you [did this thing].

[So I held you back]—[indeed I also] prevented you [from sinning against Me]. That is why I did not permit you to touch her.

7 [Now, therefore], return the man’s wife, since a prophet is he. He will pray on your behalf, [and you will live].

[But if you do not] [return her], [know that] you will surely die, both you and all that is yours.”

8 So got up Abimelekh [the next morning]. He summoned [all of his servants], [and he spoke] all the words he just heard in their ears, and afraid were the people, exceedingly.

9 So called Abimelekh for Abraham, and he said to him, “[What have you done] to us? [How did I sin] against you, [that you have brought] [over me] [and over my kingdom] a sin so great? Things that ought not to be done, you have done to me.”

10 And said Abimelekh to Abraham, “[What did you have] in view, that you have done this thing?”

11 Answered Abraham, “Since I said [to myself], ‘Surely there is no [fear of *Elohim*] in the place [I have come to].

[They will kill me] on account of my wife.’

12 [Yet it is true]: my sister, [daughter of my father] she is, even though she is not [the daughter of my mother]. And she became my wife.”

13 [And it was], [when God sent me off] to wander—[he caused me to roam]—[*Elohim* sent me away] from the house of my father;

then I said [to her], This is your kindness, that you must do for me:

to every place that we come to, [when we get there], say of me, ‘He is my brother.’”

20:14 Then took Abimelekh sheep and oxen, servants and maidservants, and gave them to Abraham.

[He gave *her*] [back to him]:—he returned Sarah his wife.

15 Then said Abimelekh, “Behold, my land [lies before you]. Wherever seems good in your eyes, go settle.”

16 To Sarah, [he had this to say]: “I hereby am giving a thousand pieces of silver to your brother.

Indeed [it is for you], a covering of the eyes (i.e. a compensation), for all [who are with you] [and before them all] [you will be vindicated].

17 Then prayed Abraham to God. And healed by *Elohim* [was Abimelekh], [as well as his wife] [and his slave girls], [so they could give birth]:

18 [since closed up]—sealed off by YHWH had been every womb in the house of Abimelekh, [end aliyah] on account of Sarah, wife of Abraham.

### The birth of Isaac

21:1 [Now YHWH] remembered Sarah, [as he had] said. [Thus did] YHWH for Sarah what He had promised.

2 [She became pregnant], [and then bore] Sarah [to Abraham] a son in his old age,

[at the appointed time] which had been mentioned to him by *Elohim*.

3 And gave Abraham [a name to his son], [who was born to him], whom Sara had borne him, [—this name: Isaac].

4 And circumcised Abraham Isaac his son at eight days old, [just as it was] [end aliyah] commanded to him by *Elohim*.

5 Abraham was a hundred years old when there was born to him this one: Isaac his son.

6 Then said Sara: Laughter has been made for me by *Elohim*; [all who hear of it] [will laugh about\* me]. \*or for me or with me

7 [And she said]: [Who would have] declared [to Abraham], “She will nurse children—Sara?” For I have borne him a son in his old age!

### The dismissal of Hagar and Ishmael

21:8 The child grew and was weaned. [And prepared] Abraham a great drinking-feast on the day on which was weaned Isaac.

9 Once Sara saw [the son of Hagar] [the Egyptian woman], whom Hagar had borne to Abraham, laughing.

10 She said to Abraham: [You must drive away] this slave together with her son.

By no means shall inherit the son [of this slave woman] with my son, with Isaac!

11 [And it was bad]—[this incident]—in the extreme in the eyes of Abraham because it involved his son.

21:12 And said *Elohim* [to Abraham]: [Do not let it be bad] in your eyes concerning the lad [and your slave woman]; in all that is said [to you]

by Sara: hearken [to her voice], for it is [through Isaac] that will be accredited to you [generations that are to come].

13 But also the son of the slave-woman—a nation [will I make of him], for your seed [he is too].  
 14 So awoke Abraham [early in the morning]. [He took some bread] and a skin of water and gave them [to Hagar]—  
 [placing them] [on her shoulder]—[along with the child], [and sent her away]. [She went off] [and roamed aimlessly] in the wilderness of Be'er Sheva.  
 15 When she used up the water in the skin, she cast off the child under one of the bushes,  
 16 She went and sat herself down [facing him], at a distance, as far away as a bowshot,  
 for she said to herself: “[Let me not see] the death of the child!” So she sat nearby, lifted up her voice and wept.  
 17 But then heard *Elohim* the voice of the lad. [Then called] an angel of God to Hagar from heaven and said to her,  
 “[What’s wrong with you], Hagar? Do not be afraid: [*Elohim* has heard], [yes, God has heard] the voice of the lad there where he is.”  
 18 Arise, lift up the lad and keep your hand strong upon him. Into a great nation [I will make him]!  
 19 And opened by God were her eyes, and she saw a well of water; [she went over], filled up the skin [with water], and gave [the lad to drink].  
 20 [And it came to pass] [that *Elohim*] [was with the lad] [as he grew up]. He settled in the desert and became an expert archer.  
 21 He settled in the wilderness of Paran, [where was taken for him] [by his mother] [end aliyah] a wife from the land of Egypt.

### Abraham and Abimelech at Beersheba

22 It happened at about that time that spoke Avimelech, together with Pikhól, [the commander of his army], to Abraham, saying,  
 “*Elohim* is [with you] in all that you [engage in].  
 23 [And so now], swear to me by *Elohim* right here: [You will not deal falsely] [with me], my progeny and my posterity.  
 [As with kindness] [I have dealt] with you, so deal [with me], [and with the land] in which you have sojourned.”  
 24 Then said Abraham: “I do so swear.”  
 25 But rebuked by Abraham, was Avimelech on account of a well of water that had been seized by the servants of Avimelech.  
 26 Then said Avimelech: “I do [not know] who could have done this thing,  
 [nor have you] ever [told me], [and in fact] [I myself] have not heard it until today.”  
 27 Then took Abraham sheep and oxen [and gave them] to Avimelech, and they made, the two of them, [a binding treaty].  
 28 Then took Abraham [seven of the lambs]—ewe-lambs of the flock, [and set them aside].



21:29 Then said Avimelekh to Abraham: “What [is the meaning] of the seven ewe-lambs [right here] that you have just set aside?”  
 30 [Abraham said]: “Indeed, these seven ewe-lambs you should take from my hand, so that they may be a for me a witness that I dug this well.  
 31 [For this reason] [they give the name] of the place that this happened Be’er-Sheva [well of the seven or swearing].  
 [For indeed] there they swore an oath—the two of them].  
 32 Thus they cut a covenant in Be’er-Sheva.  
 Then arose Avimelekh and Pikhōl the commander of his army, and returned to the land of the Philistines.  
 33 And he planted a tamarisk in Be’er-Sheva, [and he called out there] the name YHWH, God of the Ages.  
 34 Thus sojourned Abraham [end aliyah] in the land of the Philistines, for many days.

### The sacrifice of Isaac

22:1 [Now it happened] after these events, that Elohīm tested Abraham  
 and said to him: “Abraham!” And he said: “Here I am.”  
 2 [And this is what God said]: “[I do command you to take]  
 your son, [your favorite one], [whom you love], Isaac, [and go you forth] to the land of Moriya [=seeing]  
 and give him up] there as an offering upon one of the mountains [that I] will point out to you.  
 3 Abraham awoke early [in the morning]. He saddled his donkey, [and he took along] [his two] [young men] [with him]; also Isaac his son.  
 He split some wood for the offering, and arose and set out for the place which was told to him by Elohīm.  
 4 [On day the third] [lifted up] Abraham [his eyes whereupon] he saw the place from afar.  
 5 And said Abraham [to his young men]: “[You stay] here [with the donkey], and I and the lad will go [to that place].  
 [We will worship], and return to you.”  
 6 So took Abraham the wood [for the offering]. [He placed it] upon Isaac his son.  
 [He took] in his hand the fire and the slaughter-knife. Then walked off the two together.  
 7 Then spoke Isaac to Abraham his father. He said: “[My father]!” He replied “[Here I am], my son.”  
 [Isaac then said]: “[Here I see] the fire and here is the wood, but where is the lamb for the offering?”  
 8 And said Abraham: “Elohīm will [provide the lamb] for the offering, my son.” Thus they walked off, the two of them—they went off together.

22:9 [And they came] [to the place] [that was] [mentioned by] *Elohim*.

Then built Abraham there [the altar], [and arranged there] the wood,  
and bound Isaac his son, [and proceeded] [to place him] on the altar on top of the wood.

10 [And stretched out] Abraham his hand. He took the slaughter-knife to slay his son.

11 But there called out to him an angel of YHWH from heaven, and said: “Abraham, Abraham!” [He said: “Here] I am”].

12 [And the angel said]: “[Do not stretch out] your hand [toward the lad]. Do not do anything to him!

[For indeed] now [I do know] [that a God-fearing] man (*y'rei Elohim*) [are you].

[Inasmuch as you] [have surely not withheld] your son, your favored one, [from me].

13 Then lifted up Abraham [his eyes, at which time] he saw: [there, a ram], after it had been caught in a thicket [by its horns].

[And so went] Abraham, [and he took] the ram and brought it as an offering, in place of his son.

14 [Then called] Abraham the name of that place: “YHWH | *Yireh*” (“Adonai sees”).

Just as it is said [this day]: “On the mountain of YHWH, God is seen.”

15 [Then there called] the angel of YHWH to Abraham [a second time] from heaven

16 [The angel said]: “By myself I swear, [declares YHWH], [indeed I declare it],

because [you have] done this [very thing], and have not withheld your son, your favored one,

17 I will bestow [my blessing upon you]. I will greatly increase your seed like the stars of the heavens

[and like the sand] that is found [on the shore] [of the sea]. And inherited [by your seed] will be the very gate of their enemies,

18 [Then shall enjoy blessing] [through your seed], all the nations [of the earth], [all this because] you have obeyed my voice.

19 [Then returned] Abraham [to his young men]. [They then arose] and went off together to Be'er-Sheva.

And remained—Abraham—in Be'er-Sheva.

### The descendants of Nahor

22:20 [And it happened] after these events that it was told to Abraham, saying:

[You must be aware:], [she has borne]—Milcah, [even she]—sons to Nachor your brother:

21 Utz his firstborn, and Buz his brother, Kemuel father of Aram,

22 and Kesed and Chazo, Pildash, and Yidlaf, [and also] Betuel.

23 Now Betuel begot Rivka. These eight bore Milcah to Nachor, brother of Abraham.

24 And his concubine—her name was Re'uma—[she also bore] children, Tevach and Gacham,  
[end aliyah] and Tachash, and Ma'akha.

## Len Fellman's English readings with tropes

The purpose of this project is to translate *THE SONG OF THE TORAH* into English.

I work by comparing as many as ten English translations of a *pasuk* and creating a cantillated English sentence that sounds as much as possible like the Hebrew. They follow the Hebrew as closely as possible, word for word and trope by trope. The English language has an amazing flexibility, making it possible to make the English word order match that of the Hebrew quite well, allowing for some “poetic licence”, and some willingness on the part of the listener to be “carried” by the melody more than by the English syntax. The translation needs to sound good when *chanted*, but not necessarily when *spoken or read*.

Unlike most translations, these “transtropilations” are not intended to be a substitute for the Hebrew. On the contrary, they are meant to provide a “window” into the Hebrew text and its musical expression. My ideal listener knows enough Hebrew and has enough interest to follow the Hebrew in a bilingual text while the *leyner* is chanting the English version, to bring the Hebrew text to life, both *verbally* and *musically*. For this purpose I use *exactly* the same tropes in the English as in the Hebrew (almost always on the corresponding English word).

The texts can be used to do **consecutive translation**, i.e. leyning a phrase in Hebrew, followed by the corresponding phrase sung in English. Some of my recordings demonstrate this. I do this frequently when leyning for groups that either know little Hebrew, or that don't have a *chumash* in front of them.

I favor literal translations (e.g. “cut a covenant”) to call attention to Hebrew idioms, and towards simpler (even if less accurate) words (e.g. Ex. 12:7 “beam above the door” rather than “lintel”) to be easier to follow. If my readings provoke a discussion of the Hebrew, I consider that as justification for using less-than-idiomatic English. I try to find just the right balance between “literalness” and “listenable-ness”. A primary goal is throwing light on the Hebrew syntax.

In order to adapt the trope symbols to a left-to-right language like English, I *reversed* the direction of the trope symbols:

mercha tipcha munach tevir mapakh *or* yetiv kadma *or* pashta geresh gershayim telisha katana telisha gedola

(Generally speaking the *conjunctive tropes* such as mercha, munach, mapakh, kadma, and telisha katana “lean toward” the words they “conjoin” to, while the *disjunctive tropes* such as tipcha, geresh, gershayim, and telisha gedola “lean away” from the words that follow, so as to create a sense of separation.)

The trope symbol is normally placed under the accented syllable, unless it is a *pre-positive* accent (telisha gedola, placed *at the beginning* of the word or phrase) or a *post-positive* one (telisha katana or pashta, placed at the *end* of the word or phrase).

The Hebrew text frequently puts a *makkeph* (which is like a hyphen) between words in order to treat them as a single word to be chanted. I use a different system for English: If an entire English phrase is to be chanted to a single trope melody, I place it between grey brackets, as in this phrase from the Book of Lamentations:

[clings to her skirts]

The *leyner* is invited to fit this phrase to the *Eicha* “rivi'i” melody in whatever way seems most natural.

As a variant of the “grey bracket” device, I indicate pairs of tropes by “wrapping them around” the phrase which have the combined melody:

mercha/tipcha	kadma/geresh ( <i>or</i> : azla, etc.)	mercha siluk
(Renew our days)	(She weeps bitterly).	(a fire-offering to God)

Again, the *leyner* should decide on the most natural way to fit the phrase to the combined trope melody.

I put words in gray which I consider essential but which don’t strictly match the Hebrew. I also “pad” some phrases with extra words in gray to fill out a musical phrase nicely. Different trope systems vary widely in the length of the musical phrase used, so the words in gray may or not be used depending on the *leyner*’s cantillation system. In particular, the tropes *telisha g’dola* (ר), *legarmeh*, *metigah-zakef*, and *pazer* vary widely in the musical phrases used for chanting. (And please indulge me in my whimsical treatments of *shalshelet*.)

“*Metigah-zakef*” is a special trope combination which can be recognized by a kadma and a zakef katon appearing on the same Hebrew word (again, a *makkeph* makes two words into one). (There are several examples in Genesis 18 & 19, beginning with 18:16). I indicate this by placing the corresponding English phrase in grey brackets:

[Take heed—take care for yourself]

In some trope systems (viz. cantor Moshe Haschel in “Navigating the Bible II”) this is given a distinctive melody—I add extra syllables to fill out the musical phrase (as in “take care” in this example). Haschel’s system also chants the trope *munach* as *legarmeh* more often than other systems do.

I don’t write a single word of translation without first hearing the melody of the phrase in my mind, following one of two trope systems: The one by Portnoy and Wolff (*The Art of Cantillation*) or the one by Joshua R. Jacobson (*Chanting the Hebrew Bible*).

I transcribe the name יהוה as YHWH (in small caps). I almost always chant this as *yud-hey-vav-hey*, which I have discovered fits marvelously into several of the trope melodies. But of course the *leyner* can choose to pronounce it as “*God*” or “*Adonai*”.

Warning on the Hebrew text: The text I use for the English trope system is from Aryeh Kaplan; the Hebrew text I display is from Wikisource. Occasionally (but rarely) a phrase will use different tropes in the two systems.

*The English translations I mostly use (besides several scholarly commentaries) are the following:*

Aryeh Kaplan, ‘The Living Torah’ (1981) (also my source for proper names & transliterations)  
Richard Elliott Friedman, ‘The Bible With Sources Revealed’ (2003)  
Everett Fox, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (1997)  
The Stone Edition ‘Tanach’ (1996)  
JPS ‘Hebrew-English Tanach’, (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. 2000), *along with* Orlinsky, ‘Notes on the New Translation of the Torah’ (1969)  
Robert Alter, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (2004)  
Commentaries in the ‘Anchor Bible’ series  
Rotherham, The Emphasized Bible (1902)  
The Jerusalem Bible (1966) (also my source for topic headings)  
The New King James Bible (1982)